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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [RU](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: GEORGIA: SITREP 24: GEORGIANS WELCOME VICE
PRESIDENT CHENEY AND U.S. AID

REF: A. TBILISI 1506
[B](#). TBILISI 1496
[C](#). TBILISI 1482
[D](#). TBILISI 1474

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#). (C) Summary. President Saakashvili warmly welcomed Vice President Cheney to Georgia, with the visit receiving extensive local coverage. The September 3 announcement of a one-billion-dollar U.S. aid package was also well received, with some calling it a Marshall Plan for Georgia. The OSCE was refused access to Akhagori for the first time September [4](#). Some experts question the extent of mining of Georgian bases in the west. The Russian Embassy has stopped operating, but Ambassador Kovalenko remains in Tbilisi. End Summary.

THE VICE PRESIDENT ARRIVES; AID PACKAGE PRAISED

[2](#). (U) Almost all the local TV channels covered Vice President Cheney's visit to Tbilisi, focusing on the joint statement with President Saakashvili. The Vice President held a long one-on-one meeting with Saakashvili, followed by a lunch and then a stop-by at an incoming humanitarian assistance flight at the airport prior to departure for Kyiv.

[3](#). (U) Washington's announcement of one billion dollars in assistance for Georgia was praised extensively in the local press, with some commentators calling it Georgia's "Marshall Plan." The European parliament's 35-point resolution on the situation, along with the Budget Committee's proposal to freeze 60 million euros in assistance to Russia, also received broad approval in local media. During his September 3 visit to Tbilisi, Italian Foreign Minister Frattini reportedly offered to mediate between Georgia and Russia, inviting Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev to an international conference in Rome on September 18.

RUSSIAN REFUSE OSCE ACCESS TO AKHALGORI

[4](#). (C) After another inconclusive meeting with General Kulakhmetov on access beyond Russian checkpoints on September 3, the OSCE saw a Russian checkpoint refuse one of its patrols access to Akhagori on September 4. The Russian checkpoints south of Akhagori were established quite recently and described as temporary measures (see refs C and D), and the OSCE has not had difficulty passing them in the past. The OSCE plans to meet with Kulakhmetov again on September 4 to discuss access to Akhagori.

[5](#). (SBU) To clarify the numbers reported in ref B, the OSCE explained that 19 additional monitors have arrived in Georgia, to bring the current total to 27, with one more (from Austria) due to arrive shortly. Discussions at senior

levels continue on the modalities for an additional 80. Local OSCE contacts stressed the importance of including them under the same mandate as the current group, in order to avoid difficulties stemming from South Ossetian "authorities" claiming that the newer monitors are not covered by earlier agreements and therefore do not enjoy the same level of access.

CLEANUP CONTINUES, BUT EXTENT OF MINING QUESTIONED

16. (C) The press reports that demining operations continue in Vaziani, Poti, Kopitnari and elsewhere. Bombs of sizes 1.5 tons, 1 ton, and 500 kilograms were reportedly found along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in the vicinity of Vaziani airport. U.S. partners report that, while extensive mining has been found in the Gori region, limited mining is evident so far in such western locations as Senaki and Kutaisi, despite government claims.

RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR STILL IN TOWN

17. (U) Although the Russian Embassy has closed all operations, including consular services, Ambassador Kovalenko reportedly remains in Tbilisi. At the same time, the press also reported that consular operations were still available at the Russian embassy for applicants who had requested services before September 1.
TEFFT